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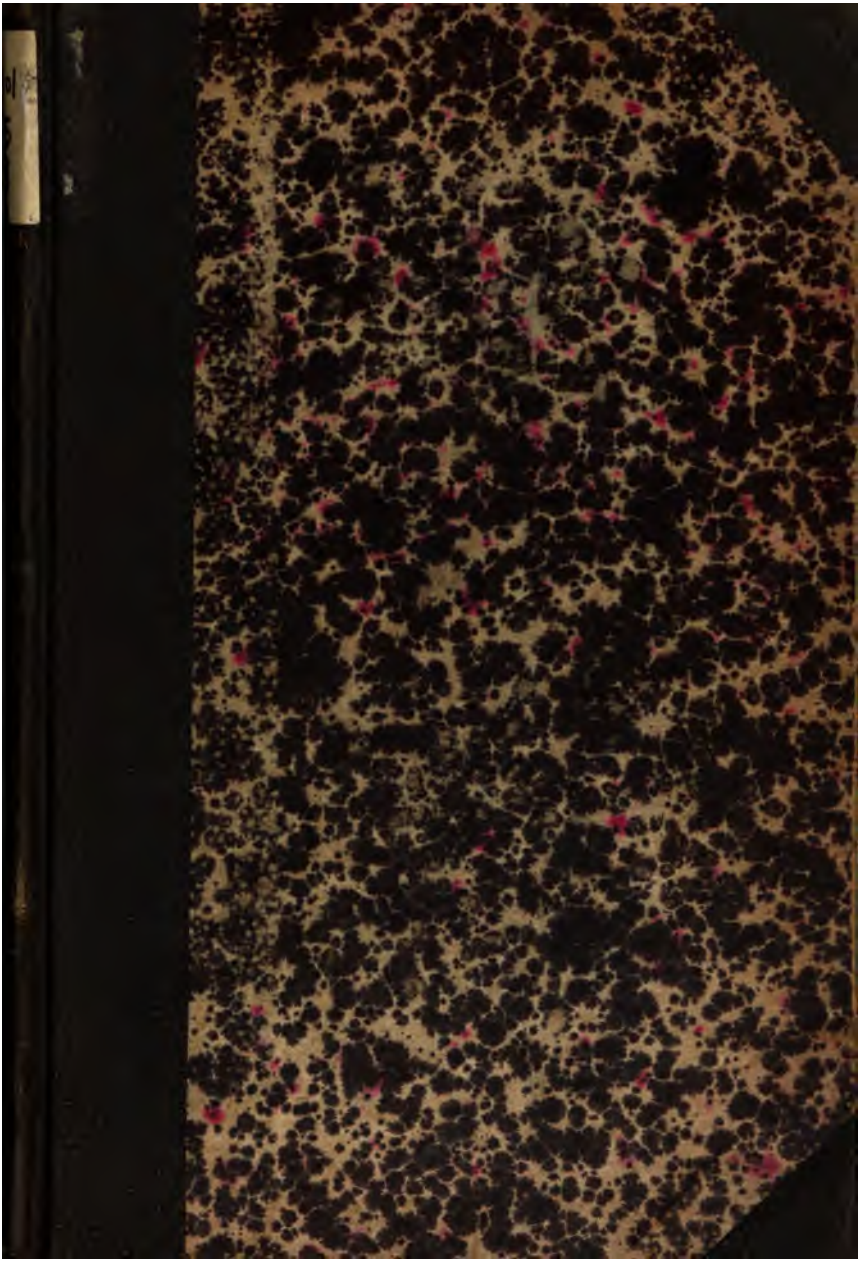

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[COLLECTANEA ADAMANTÆA.—XVIII.]

A HISTORY OF AMULETS,

BY

MARTIN FREDERICK BLUMLER.

ENGISHED FROM THE LATIN

BY

S. H., Gent.

FIRST PRINTED AT HALLE

BY

CHRISTOPHER ANDREW ZEITLER,

At the University Press.

VOL. I.

PRIVATELY PRINTED,
EDINBURGH.

1887.

[Collectanea Adamantæa.]

A History of Amulets.

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INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE.

GWELFERBYT, *23rd July* 1710.

"MY LEARNED BLUMLER,

Your recent letter gave me just cause for joy and gratulation, because it informed me that you intend to give a brilliant public exhibition of that industry which you have hitherto applied to your own studies. It allowed me also to perceive that you are meditating the writing of a dissertation on charms, a brief sketch of which you are kind enough to make for me. The pleasure and agreeable feelings which such an announcement inspires in me, you can easily appreciate by remembering my desire and longing for your welfare. The service however which you

require of me, of sending you a letter to serve as an introduction to your essay, I have only with the very deepest misgivings prevailed upon myself to render, knowing as I do the long continued and praiseworthy efforts of great scholars in the elucidation of this subject. The "Dissertatio de Amuletis" of Julius Reichelt contains much curious matter, and is excellently written. The subject is also fully treated of in the work of Jacob Wolff, a curious and laborious book published in quarto, at Leipsic, (1692) along with the above mentioned dissertation of Reichelt. The "Dissertatio de Amuletis Argent.," of Reinius, (1677) lays bare ancient superstition on this subject. I need not mention Bartholinus and others who in their peculiar treatises on this matter can supply you with a large stock of varied information for your dissertation. Nor do I think it worth while to go into any detail in mentioning such works as Hoffmann's "Lexicon ejusque Continuatio Tom. ii. voxque Periaps;" Del-Rio's "Disquis. Magic." Bk. i., c. 4. quæst. 1-4.; Paschius's "De Novis Inventis," c. 6, p. 393, seq.; Brendelius's "Dissert. Wittel. 1706 habita," and in "Nov. Lit. (Hamburg 1706) p. 293," his review on the cure of diseases by songs and incantations, wherein he rejects the idea of healing by means of charms. Such works I know must be well known to you. I see no reason for discussing at length with you

the causes of charms either true or false. Such matters will be collected in great abundance from Cornelius Agrippa in his introduction to the subject of Occult Philosophy, from Hehnontius on "The Great Virtues of Words, Herbs, and Stones," from Longinus on "Secret Magic Spells," from Fernelius on "The Hidden causes of Phenomena," and also from those who have given attention to the writings of the Teutonic philosopher, Crollius. The great number of charms is evident from a glance at history for

> Fingant se Medicos quivis Idiota, Sacerdos
> Judæus Histrio, Vasor, Anus.

And you would be tired out by a full enumeration of them. How great, by all the gods! has been the influence of superstition among Pagan peoples in framing such ideas! among their charms they numbered

> Faunos, Priapos, fistularum præsides,
> Nymphas natantes, incolasque aquatiles
> Sitas sub alto more ranarum lacu,
> Deos Latinos et Deos Egyptios
> Quîs Roma libat, quîs Canopus supplicat.

And this at the instance of a senseless superstition. To this head are referable the Tsilmenaja, Talismanes or Tilsemata of the Chaldæans, Egyptians,

Persians, &c., which were used for averting or predicting events.[1] We must carefully distinguish the use of Hieroglyphics from that of Amulets, which are easily confounded in reading the history of these nations. It is clear to me that these pictures were called in Greek 'agalmata' and 'apotelesmata,' and I have various authorities to support me.[2] You have probably others. On the subject of Talismans I would give you some facts were not that task rendered unnecessary by Gaffarellus,[3] a perusal of whose work is enough to shew his superstitious temperament; by Charles Sorell, in his work of Magic Spells, in which he opposed Gaffarellus, whose credulity he attacks with great erudition, by Greg. Michael,[4] by Loscherus,[5] by Stillingfleet,[6] who in the passage noted below, quotes several additional authorities, by Selden,[7] and by Salmasius,[8] besides several

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[1] Stanley's Histor. Phil. Orient., Bk. i., Sect. 2, c. 26 seqq.

[2] Thom. Gale "Court of the Gentiles," P. 2., Bk. i., c. 4, Sect. 4.—Owen de Idolat. Bk. iii., c. 7.—Voetius Dissert. de Magia, Sect. 7.

[3] Curios. Iuand. P. 1. c. 6.

[4] Notes on Gaffarellus, p. 257.

[5] Diss. de Talism. Witteb. 1698.

[6] Orig. Sac., Bk. i., ch. 3, Sect. 3, p. 80.

[7] De Diis Syris, Bk. 1., cap. 2.

[8] De Annis Climact., p. 578.

other writers whom I have recommended above. You must, therefore, not expect any illustration from me of your dissertation seeing that so many public writings bear on it, which have struck me when rapidly reviewing the subject. I wish you to understand that these remarks have not been made with the object of explaining in a few words a subject which requires the deepest study, nor of giving you information which everyone possesses, but from the desire that you should recognise that, while not satisfying your request, I have still not altogether neglected the task you imposed on me. In conclusion, I congratulate you with all my heart on this your proposed undertaking, and you have my best wishes in your career as a student. Your career has not only begun with resolution, and continued under the approbation of men conspicuous for their scholarship and uprightness in the Julian Academy; you have also added to this zeal sincerity of conduct, and have begun your professional life in a very auspicious manner. Keep on, therefore, diligently in your studies, a diligence which I have no doubt will some day produce results of which you will never be ashamed. May Providence, the true Charm of our life, smooth away all the dangers which may threaten to disturb or corrupt the sincere uprightness of your soul, the diligence you now shew for your studies, or the happiness of your life, and

thus may your worthy parents and myself have frequent occasions for rejoicing and gratulation. Farewell.

With best wishes,

GOTTL. SAMUEL TREUER, P.P.

PREFACE.

IF there is any vice which has passed over all people and oppressed the minds, and seized on the faculties of almost all mankind, that vice must be regarded as superstition. Its dominion, however, has especially been over the minds of the vulgar, because there is nothing that has a more powerful influence over the minds of the multitude than this same superstition. Hence it has not inaptly been called by Isodorus (Bk. viii. Etymol. c. 50. Bk. ii. c. 28) a kind of unnecessary and superfluous observation of things, while Servius (in viii. Æneid) has called it an empty dread of the phenomena that are over our head—that is, the celestial bodies—and of the divine which is beyond us. What else, indeed,

is superstition than an empty and meaningless worship which mankind pays to what they ought not. All superstitious people worship God in a perverse way, either in the way in which they pay such worship, or in doing things hateful to Him. It is a worship which is invented by the corrupt nature of man, which wishes to reverence God according to its own idea, but with no result. Such worship is increased by the avarice of man, as we see in the story of Daniel and Belus of Babylon, and it is festered by the senseless fears of mankind (Psalm xii.) Hence superstition receives condemnation not only at the hands of divine but human laws. Nor, if anyone bestows any care on the examination of its effects and adjuncts will he have any doubts about its condemnation being a just one. Superstitious people believe in spectres, and imaginary apparitions, a fact which is so well known as to dispense with the necessity of proof. The superstitious fear the constellations of heaven; they observe seasons and times, they fix worship on a locality: they attempt to defeat an enemy by their superstitious beliefs, as happened in the case of the people of

Constantinople, when besieged by the Turkish army, in 1453 (Camer. Hor. Sub. Cent. ii.); they try to drive away disease by inscriptions, and to tame serpents by incantations; they hang round their necks the Gospel of John, and with an implicit confidence in an empty and vain system they endeavour to discover charms, phylacteries, periammatta, or antidotes against all kinds of harm. A careful consideration of these matters and the observation of the extreme hideousness of this vice, its present great prevalence, its frequent and welcome reception by the vulgar, and its almost daily occurrence have induced me to subject (from consideration not only of the curious nature of the subject but of the usefulness arising from its discussion), to a public examination an account of charms, with a Review thereof. My object is to prevent the confusion of what is lawful with what is not, of what is false with what is true. We have, indeed, within our reach, very neat and costly figures as charms, which have been collected from the museums of the learned and famous, and from rare manuscripts and books, by Treuer. This

scholar may perhaps have a better opportunity on some future occasion of expounding his views, in the midst of his more profound studies, when those images or figures would be at his command, which have been credited with some virtue by Pagans, Jews, or Christians. In fact, it is his intention to give an account of charms, painted, carved, written, spoken, meteoric, found by accident, made by skill, ancient, modern, large, small, obscure, smooth, metallic, wooden, made of paper or stone, and whether of a serious or sportive nature: in short of what are called in France Jettons, along with their various analogical, astrological, imaginary, magnetic, natural or imparted qualities. Meanwhile may Providence guide everything to a propitious conclusion, and make each thing work for good.

A History of Amulets,

BY

MARTIN FREDERICK BLUMLER.

I.

IN my attempt to discuss the nature of amulets it will be necessary to examine somewhat carefully into the etymology of the word, and into their nature and properties. Grammarians are at variance whether the word for charm is rightly written Amoletum or Amuletum. The former view is defended by Vossius (Etym. p. 27, ib. de Idol. p. 1522), and Varro (Divinar. 42); the latter by Parhasius in Janus Gruterus (Thesaur. Crit. T. 50. Syllog. iv., ep. 37, p. 767). I shall not, however, be a severe or exacting critic of the opinions of these men, as to which of the two spellings is the more correct, for the pronunciation of the word is a matter of no importance. There

are writers who take the word Amulet from Amula, and have considerable arguments to support their case, but Anton. Sabellicus (In annot. Plin. Bk. 24, c. 9), cannot be considered as one of their number. My own decision will, in this case, be open to less cavil, if I admit the validity of both spellings, according to circumstances. We can say amulet if we take the word from antiquity and from the fact that the amula was a small vessel used in token of expiation and healing (Smet. Antiq. Neomagens, p. 67); and we can say Amolet as that by which we try to *mollify* disease or evils (Heurny. Inst. Med. Bk. 12, c. ii., p. 450). We shall see that the amulet is often taken for that philactery, as such, which is directed against disease and pestilent poisons. The other methods of pronouncing and rendering this idea of charms, have the source of their nomenclature either in the method of application, or in the outward shape and method of producing them, or lastly in the manner of operation of the charm. Amulets have been ere this called *pentacula*, or *pendacula* according to others, words which are doubtless derived from *pendere* to hang; they have also been termed *præbia*, because they are thought to afford *(præbere)* safety to those on whom they are hung. The Greek words, corresponding to these are *apotropaia*, which is taken from *apotropein*, to ward off (Claud. Minois.

Comment. ad Alciat. Embl. 78, p. 318). Among doctors they are called *alexeteria*, *alexipharmaka*, although doctors are not agreed as to the nature of the cure they are meant to effect, or to the method of applying them (Vid. Lex. Med. et ex illis Blancard). In Hebrew, according to Buxtorf, the word amulet is represented by a word signifying a tying or ligature, in which small pieces of paper, with a text of Scripture, are placed and tied round the neck to ward off disease (Lexic. Thalmudic. p. 2057), and an account of these, taken from the Jewish records, has been given by that famous student of antiquity, and learned philologist, Dr. Præp. Hermann Von Der Hardt, in his singular treatise (In Ænigmat. Judæor. religios. Helmstadi. excus. 1705). The Germans also have many names for the amulet, which either from their various characters or means of application, are termed **Giftsteine, Schroecksteine, Krampfringe, Angehaenge**, &c. (Georg. Phædro. in der volkommenen Heilung. aller Schaeden). I shall not here insist on the various meanings of amulets. The term, in a wider and analogical sense, is taken for refutation and defence, as Libavius, in the composition of his spells, takes his own words from Psalm iii. and cxvii. Amulet, therefore, means everything which men tie round their neck or any other part of their body, or which they fasten on them in any

way whatever, or even wear in their clothes, or place in a certain place to drive off disease, to strengthen the body, or to bring about other results, whether that be done in a lawful and natural or superstitious manner. More strictly, it means a body marked with characters, either arbitrary, or with a definite shape, which is used to produce certain effects of a peculiar character, and which is invested with a kind of supernatural virtue. Meanwhile, either of the meanings can be taken in my thesis.

II.

THE antiquity of Amulets is proved by many from the Syrian Theraphim, Gen. xxxi. 19, which agree with the Tilsema of the Samæans, a fact however somewhat discredited by Pfeifferus (Dissert. de Theraphim). Some ascribe the origin of the Arabian Tilsema to Apollonius Tyanæus (Athanas. Kircher Œdip. Aegypt. T. ii. P. ii.), others consider Zoroaster as the originator, for it was perhaps following the spelling of his own name that he introduced his astrological spells (as the word in Greek signifies an astrologer or priest of the stars). Next to the Arabians the Sabæans gave most attention to the making of Tilsema, and the name of a famous workman in this line is mentioned, Ibu Vahschyn. So much for special kinds of amulets. With

greater truth the origin and invention of amulets is to be ascribed to idle and ignorant persons, quacks, and superstitious doctors whose education in the rudiments of the Christian religion has been neglected, to jugglers and other crafty men of the kind, who, being unable to cure diseases by means of legitimate healing prescriptions, slip into those silly, fraudulent, superstitious and magical methods or use images which have been called by Paracelsus the nostrums and medicines of the Devil. The better known writers on the subject of amulets give us considerable information: Cornelius Agrippa (In Occulta sua philosophia), Theophrastus Paracelsus (in Archidoxi Magica), Jacob Gaffarellus (Curiosités), are among the number although very many writers who have treated of the subject are almost silent on this particular point.*

III.

THAT amulets were common among the peoples of the earth when they served and worshipped the devil is neither a new nor wonderful statement. Thus writers tell us of Eudemius and of his wonderful skill in making rings for charms. The Psilli, a people of Lybia,

* See Appendix.

are said to have been able to stupify serpents with a deadly odour, and Arnobius (Bk. ii. p. 39), tells us they sold small plates for the cure of lizard bites. Among Orientals, especially in Egypt, incantation and superstitions in the matter of strengthening the bodies of men of war were fully accepted (Francisc. Redi de Exper. nat. Indic. p. 21). Homer is worth quoting among others on this point when he says (Odyss iii.) (I give a Latin version of his words) :—

> Fertilis Ægyptus rerum medicamina mista
> Optima multa simul, deterrima plurima profert.

And Juvenal (Sat. 15) again :—

> Quis nescit, qualia demens
> Ægyptus portenta colat.

Corn. Agrippa should be consulted on the subject of other Oriental peoples who are given to magic (de Vanit. scientiat. c. 24, p. 159). Thessaly is thought to lie under a suspicion of believing in magical poisons, for the poets and others record that in ancient times thessalian philtres were produced. Barthius is our authority, but he is opposed by Claudianus (p. 1121). The Turks of Syra ascribe to the number "thirty-six," a peculiar virtue in dispelling disease, and accordingly inscribe it on several charms.*

* See Appendix.

IV.

THE Jews, although they had a true God, yet had too little regard for the divine commands against shunning magic and superstition. They listened not to their own teachers, but went a whoring, and followed other gods, and bowed themselves to these gods, and departed not a whit from their hardened path of life. Lightfoot (Hor. Ebr. Matth., p. 447), proves that the Jews held the amulets which were introduced from Egypt in great esteem, and made great use of them; they were unsurpassed in their devotion to incantations, a statement testified to by R. Dav. Kimchi and R. Abarbanell. They boast that the art (for such is the name they claim for it when they call it famous, absolute and perfect) was shewn and communicated to Solomon in one night, and that by its means, through the instrumentality of rings, small images, horoscopes, and such like nonsense which are termed by them Teraphim, many curious things are done. In the shield of David, by means of which David is said to have been rendered impervious to darts and invulnerable, as we are told by Geier (de superstit. cap. iii., n. xli.) was written in the three exterior triangles: *The Lord* (*my*) *God.*

It was made, they say, by Antiochus Soteres,

and was used in the expedition against the Galatians, and its points are inscribed with the letters υγιεια. In other copies of this amulet, however the words meaning *the God of Terror* appear between the points, while between these again are the words, *Almighty God.* Lastly inside the pentagogue there is a triangle, in which is placed.

ω

α α

Another inscription on the shield of David can be seen by consulting Schickard *tarchim* (p. 54). The superstitious Jewish race uses this charm against fire, and to extinguish conflagrations, along with the Hebrew verse from Numbers xi., v. 2.

"*The people shouted to Moses, and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire was stopped.*" After they have carried it thrice round the place where the fire is, they cast it into the flames. In order that we may see how tenacious are early superstitions, and with what pertinacity they introduce the hideous sacred symbols of the ancients into the more civilized sacred usages and sentiments of the present day, I shall call attention to the following points. First, there are amulets of complaint which bring misfortunes on the heads of one's enemies :—

"*Oh, Lord, may thy right hand kindle thy*

quenchless fire against mine enemies. Oh, Holy Father, look on my affliction, save me, wash me, oh Almighty God," &c.

In the second place we have the solemn and famous amulet which is very dear to the Jews, and which finds very great acceptance with them for supplanting, overcoming or routing the Devil. The word means to cleave, dissipate, and to destroy. For averting any evil whatever they consider *Agla* very formidable, as by its means they boast stupendous prodigies are effected, losses averted, and things which cannot be improved by human aid put to rights. In particular they promise that fires among themselves and other peoples, even among the Christians themselves, can be put out by this mysterious spell, and the word is engraved on their amulets in bold letters.

The following amulet is taken from Genesis 39.

The Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

In this after a long winded blessing on Jacob they seek his protection. They have an amulet against fever, the symbols of which if read backwards gives the same sound.

For a full account of other Jewish amulets, I commend the book I have mentioned above that of the celebrated Dr. Hardt. But we must not

forget to refer to the phylacteries of the Jews, which the Pharisees used from pure superstition, hanging them round the neck as a defence against all kinds of danger. They had become persuaded that God himself wore phylacteries, and that the blessed would wear them in the next world, and that thus they would afford themselves a hallowed and useful protection, provided, that at stated times they recited the traditionary forms of prayer and supplication. The 5th and 6th verses of Psalm xvi., were used as amulets to discover hidden thieves. This psalm is of great use in finding out thieves. Take mud from the bank of a river, and sand from the sea, and having mixed them together, divide the mass thus formed into parts, and inscribe on these the names of all suspected of the theft in question. Then take an earthenware vessel and fill it with water from a spring, and take each of these suspected names and throw them into the water and recite over them ten times this Psalm. After each repetition of the Psalm, the following few words of prayer are to be added. *Be it well pleasing in thy sight (Oh God) that thou shouldest make known to me who has stolen this or that.* Then that portion of the mass on which his name is who stole the article will rise and ascend to the surface.

V.

WE have next in order to treat of the Christians. However some may have thought them free from superstition, it is clear they are deeply sunk in this vice, and that at the present time they are very much given to superstitious practices. In the Council of Agatha, priests were accused on this charge. Nay, in the last centuries of our era, that superstition has made progress among many, which consisted in the hanging of the beginning of the gospel of John round the neck. And about A.D. 1592, certain necromancers, or charmers, were condemned on the charge of the same devilish practices, whence they have from phylactery got the name of phylacterians (Concil. Quini Sext. Can. 61). Pignorius (in Caracteribus Ægypt.), accuses heretics of the same crime. The female sex is certainly pre-eminently famous for inventing and defending different kinds of amulets. Guevarra (Horolog. Princip. Bk. ii. c. 29, p. 28, p. 326) should be consulted on the subject of the different incantations and superstitions of women among certain ancient peoples. Mich. Freudius also treats of the subject of the various superstitious amulets which are usually employed by women in the treatment of women in child-

bed, and other troubles. Hence, women more than men, on account of their credulity and their narrow intelligence, have been open to the influences of evil spirits. After them come hunters, who spend more time in the woods than in schools or in the study of sacred ordinances. Velschius (Diss. i., p. 62), calls them men for the most part prone to every kind of superstition. Again, magicians, serpent-tamers, fortune-tellers (about each of which classes I could bring forward further facts did I think it necessary), must be ranged under the same head. Indeed, even educated men, and of these even men in the service of the Church, have made use of the hidden and supernatural properties of nature, and have even made amulets, and, terrible to relate, have actually dared to put the Sacraments to this abominable purpose. Accordingly, we find all such are the votaries of charms who love superstition, are ignorant of the charms of Natural Philosophy, are urged on by the persuasion or ruled by the opinion of others.

VI.

IN order, however, to obtain a better idea of amulets and to have a truer conception of their meaning, it will be well to distinguish between amulets in medicine which are lawful and true, and those of superstition, which are

unlawful and false. It must be confessed that we have a limited knowledge of most amulets, but I believe it unjust to deny virtue to all amulets, and rather refer to a deep examination and to the repeated results of experience for a judgment on this doctrine of the curious doctors (see B. Wolff. Tract. de Zenechtis C. ii., sect i., p. 30. seqq). I do not deny that when drugs are taken which are naturally repugnant yet fitted to meet the disease, but which depend for their action on the operations of nature, that most people do yet have recourse, in their explanation of the result, to occult properties as the refuge for their ignorance. Besides this, we have the superstitions which either have no effect, either good or bad, and to the uncertain result of which the believers in them attach some formula of excuse, as, **hilfts nicht, so schadets doch nicht.** Or if any good results ever comes, it is quite undeservedly by their superstition imputed to that false cause, and the believers in the superstition depend more on it than their own amulets depend on their necks for support, and then we have the opinion of the vulgar expressed in the words: **Wer den Glauben daran hat.** The amulet thus gets the credit of a result which has come about from causes perchance quite distinct, or even produced by a decree of heaven. Thus, midwives and nurses, roll up pieces of bread and cheese in

cloth, and hang them round the necks of infants, as a charm against witchcraft, **dass sie nicht beschrien werden.** Somewhat akin to this is that kind of superstition which is seen when they do not allow the mother within a certain space of time, even when she asks it, to see fire, nor on the day of Venus or Mars to get bread or flesh, or anything else on loan, fearing lest the newly-born child be deprived of rest. Hence others maintain. **Man soll die Kinder nicht vor den Jahre auff die Strassen tragen, dass sie keine Sommer-Flecke bekommen.**

VII.

IT will be useful in the next place to seek a deeper insight into the nature of amulets by a special enumeration of them. It is said that there are some amulets which have fallen from heaven, some found by men digging in the earth, and very many made by the handicraft of man. Each of these classes is divided into larger and smaller kinds. Those which have come from the sky are, as Iamblichus (In Libro de simulacris), explains the Palladium of the Greeks (Gyrald. de Diis. Gent. Syntag. xi. p., 468 sq.) and the shield of the Romans; the lesser amulets of this kind are said to be coins of which Thurneisserus gives an account (Onomast. suo p. 44., Vid. Paracels. de impress. cælestibus, bk.

14., c. 15). This opinion, however, is opposed by scholars who think that these coins were struck by the Vandals in Sicily. But, however I might believe the origin of these coins to have come about, I cannot attach to them any peculiar supernatural virtue. And my reason for this is that it has been found that very many other bodies possessing extraordinary marks impressed on them in a natural way, do not equally excel in any peculiar virtue. As regards amulets dug up or found in the earth: in the year 1674 three amulets of gold and of singular size were found by a countryman in Scandinavia. In 1675 they were the subject of a treatise by Prof. Scheffer, of Upsala. Brenner, Assessor of the College of Antiquaries, has a fourth amulet, the marks and figures on which agree with those of the others. This amulet is said to have been found in 1695 not far from Alingsosia in Western Gothland.

VIII.

I GO on to amulets produced by art, among which are found larger kinds on which usually the figures of animals are copied both of those actually existing, and those purely imaginary (Selden. de Diis Syris Syntagm. c. iii.) Under this head come the idol statues of the Egyptians (Marsil. Ficinus de vita cælitus comparanda. c. xiii). They represented a human

head and face, which formerly gave out responses like an oracle (Selden. c. 1). Tilsemæ which represent the figures of beasts are found in the works of historians (Hotting. Hist. Orient. p. 192). Zzetzes gives an account of how Apollonius of Tyane cleared Antioch of a plague of flies by his talismanic art.

> Apollonius hic Neronis qui fuit temporibus,
> Ille Tyanæus sapientissimus qui præsciebat omnia,
> Antiochiæ quidem facit, imo et Byzantii
> Ne ingrederentur culices, aliaque hujusmodi.

Boissardus also gives this account (De divinat, p. 343). When Apollonius came to Antioch the inhabitants were terribly infested with flies and scorpions. He constructed a scorpion of brass and ordered it to be buried in the earth. He ordered the people of Antioch to take reeds in their hands and go round the image and keep moving their reeds and shouting : *Let the city be free from flies, let the city be free from scorpions.* By this means the flies and scorpions suddenly disappeared from the city. For further information compare the Oriental History of Hottinger (Book i. c. 8 p. 192), Cardanus *on Subtilties* (Bk. 9. p. 515), and Levenclavius *Turkish Pandects.* (CCXXX.) The lesser kinds of these amulets represent natural objects either whole or mutilated. Such an amulet is called by the Spaniards

Higa and is worn by them round their necks as a protection against witchery and evil (Io. Lazar. Gutierrio de Fasc. Dub. ii. p. 9 and Dub. viii. p. 148). To this class belong the various uses of rings which were observed by the ancients in their magic. They are hung round the neck and hang down as far as the hips by means of strings. They are used as a protection against paralysis. Besides rings we have to speak of gems which craftsmen prefer to use on account of their hardness. On the front part of such an amulet the names of God and angels, on the back part the signs of the planets with the addition of the names of the presiding powers are written.

IX.

THE amulets which were marked with the signs of the Zodiac and of the other planets, were held of greater value than amulets with other inscriptions. This was on account of the influence of the heavenly bodies. No specimen of an amulet of this kind, bearing the mark of the Zodiac, has come into my hands; but I shall set down the more salient facts to be noticed in regard to them. Raphael the Jew, speaking of the ram among his own seals, says that its image was cut on a sapphire, and that it has the virtue of curing and liberating patients of many diseases. Of the Bull, Raphael tells us a story

of how it is good against the evil doing of others; of the crab that it frees from fever. Of Capricorn, he says that it defeats every judgement which has been unfairly given by a judge. Of the fishes Solomon says that they free men from gouty pains. Mitzald has the following story to tell of the sign of the Virgin. When you wish to drive a large number of crows into one place, make an image of a half crow on a piece of cloth as soon as the constellation of the Virgin rises above the horizon, saying the while, *Let no crow in all this district move away without coming to this image in whatever place it may be buried.*" Then bury it where you like, only see that it in a place where the ground and air are free. Of the Scorpion, Solomon says that its image impressed on a golden ring and Bezoar stone, or cut out on it (when the moon is in Scorpio and Scorpio is in one of the four cardinal points of the compass), has a good effect against the sting of the scorpion. Somewhat similar tales are told of the fixed stars and the seven planets, of many of which both singly, and together, amulets were constructed on a substance called electron, a mixture of seven metals, gold, silver, copper, iron, nickel, lead and quicksilver, fused together in a fixed proportion given by Paracelsus. Again, several amulets of the planets are mentioned, and Hermes Mitzald tells us that the ancients fashioned out of pure gold a ring for

strengthening the memory and thinking powers, in which was inclosed a diamond, when Jupiter and Saturn were in conjunction in the Ram. Amongst these should be placed those amulets which are said to render the body impervious to every blow of the sword or bullet. The dissertation of the great Dr. Berneggerus (p. 39, Ad. Qu. in Tacit. An amuletis militaribus aliqua contra vulnera vis infit), which though somewhat prolix has yet elements of solidity in it, should be consulted in proportion to the amount of faith we are to give to such a profession of magic. To this I need add no word of caution, except that I express my detestation of the abuse of the sign of the cross, of which B. Geier gives a full account.

X.

NEXT, we have to deal with amulets of a more obscure yet significant influence, several of which remain and very many of which are to be met with both in writers of the magic art and in the Museums of those curious in these matters. These, while used in effecting other results, are most of all employed in freeing from disease. On these amulets are found, besides various inscriptions the names of God and angels, and words of more obscure meaning which are not understood even by the magicians. A famous-

example of this kind of amulet is that in which the corrupt word Ananisapta occurs, which has excercised the mind of many but all to no purpose. Freitagius tells us (In Noct. medic. c. 39. p. 193), that the following verse is used against deadly diseases :

Ananisapta ferit mortem, qui lædere quærit.

This amulet therefore is to be fastened on those who are prostrated by any deadly disease.

XI.

UNDER this head come also rings, and the various observances in the composition and wearing of them which arise from superstition. The singular preference given to the ring finger has been remarked, and it is commonly thought to be more fitted for the retaining and carrying of rings. Pierius (Bk. 16. hieroglyphic) tells us that the finger next the smallest was a mark of the heart, and was accordingly encircled by a ring. Some there are who say that this finger is also the "medicine finger," because if potions are stirred with it, the heart can perceive if any poison has been mixed up with them (de Annulo. Gellii. Noct. Attic., bk. x., chap. 10). While on the subject of rings, I do not omit to mention that gems falling out of rings are regarded as a sign of

death. Some remarks on this and the cause thereof can be seen in Timæus (bk. ii., Cas. Med., p. 79). Rings, however, are not always of propitious nature, as is seen from the instances of such as are made from the chains of those who have been hanged, or from the iron of a gibbet, and which are recommended to be used as medicine. On their use Reinesius is to be consulted (Var. Lect., bk. iii., c. iv., p. 392). Of the Devil's ring which was used by Jacob Jodocus de Rosa, mention is made in Wier (de praestig. dæm., bk. vi., c. 2). On the ring of Gyges and its virtues see Kirchmann (bk. c., c. 39, p. 191.)

XII.

WE now come to inscriptions, seals, and tablets which are marked with various verses, words, or signs, and to other similar things used as ornaments for the neck. There are some who attribute a singular holiness and efficacy to Hebrew words and letters. Thus John Tilemann (de mater. medic., p. 326 tells us to write Hebrew words on an article which has been prepared in a certain way, and fasten it to our body as a safeguard for its seven principal parts. Others say we should write the words of the first promise in Genesis c. iii. on the walls and doors of our houses to put to flight the Devil and

evil spirits. Foreign letters, characters and words, have come under suspicion, because there are often contained in these an invocation of the evil spirit and other horrible matters which come under the direction and control of the Devil in person. Perhaps too, magicians, such are their tricks, teach or hand down inscriptions and such like things written in a foreign or obscure idiom, or imperfectly legible in order to gain greater confidence from those, who, if these inscriptions were conceived in an ordinary open faced manner would withdraw all belief in their efficacy. No one can help suspecting that an evil spirit inculcates the use of unknown words, characters and figures which concern its own worship in order that fuller sanctity, confidence and belief may be accorded them from the ignorant, simple and pious. This is the case with the gospel of John, which many wear round their neck. They would do more for their own safety if they wrote it on their heart, and lived a Christian life according to its teaching. Nay, rashness has so completely overwhelmed some people, that they have dared to imitate Christ, his Apostles, and other holy men, and have attempted like them to cure diseases with words. They receive a just censure at the hands of Freitagius (bk. 100, c. xxxix., p. 191). We may here touch for a little on the foolish and superstitious benedic-

tion commonly used when infants, cattle, plants or crops are praised, for many believe that witchcraft is made to pass into all such things, unless certain words of blessing are first used or attached to them in place of a charm. These words are frequently in the mouths of the German common people:—**Gott gebe es ihm zu gute, dass ichs zur guten Stunde rede,*** **dass ichs nicht berufe, beschreie, Gott segne und behute es.**" Next, we have to speak of those of the higher classes, who mark their furniture with inscriptions, or write certain words on scraps of paper, or recite barbarous words by rote. Thus many people repeat the following words to staunch the flow of blood.

Sanguis mane in tua vena, sicut Christus in sua poena!
Sanguis mane fixus, sicut Christus quando fuit crucifixus.

In cases of bleeding at the nose certain wicked men thus proceed. After making the sign of the cross thrice, repeating the Lord's Prayer thrice, and likewise the Ave Maria, they say over the following words: *Max*, *Hackx*, *Lyacx*, *Iesus Christus*. And they believe they can by this means stop the flow of blood. In the same way they use the following formula against the plague:

* Ad plura vid. Deusing. Diss. Fascic. Dissert. i. section 22. Frommann. de Fascino., p. 63.

I. N. Qui verbum caro factum est &c. Conterat X omnem potestatem inimicorum nostrorum, R. I. visibilium et invisibilium, ille ab hac domo et habitantibus in ea, expellat omnem diaboli nequitiam &c. Ipsa purificet, et sanctificet. Ecce crucen X Christi fugite partes aduersae. Vicit Leo de tribu Iuda, radix Dauid. Agios X. Acheas, X. Agios Ischyrios X. Agios Athaneos X. Eleemosynas, Kyrie Eleison.

To bring harm to enemies the superstitious make use of the following signs and words. They paint or draw the form of the cross three times, by which they indicate the Trinity as if it were the judge of the just and false cause, and add to each of the three crosses these words:

✠ *Esoneliom.*
✠ *Emores ales.*
✠ *Ege.**

Others believe that epilepsy is cured by the following words:

Caspar fert myrrham, thus Melchior, Balthasar aurum,
Haec tria, qui secum portabit nomina Regum,
Soluitur a morbo Christi pietate caduco.

* Meieri Hexenbuch. T. ii. p. m. 233.

They attempt to drive off the toothache by the following verse:

Strigiles, falcesque dentatæ, dentium dolorem persanate.

Under this head must come that superstitious and lauded spell called Abra Cadabra. Baronius tells us in his "Annals" that *Q. Serenus Sammonicus*, an ancient doctor, a disciple of the heretic Basilis, wrote out medical prescriptions in a metrical form and hung them round the patient believing that he had thus given him a cure for every disease.

Inscribes chartæ, quod dicitur Abracadabra
Sæpius et subter repetes, sed detrahe summam,
Et magis atque magis desint elementa figuris,
Singula, quæ semper rapies et cetera figes.
Donec in angustum redigatur littera conum.
His lino nexis, collum redimere memento.
Talia languentis conducent vincula collo
Lethalesque abigent (miranda potentia) morbos.

The method of writing it is here given:

A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
A

In regard to the origin of this word, it seems, according to some, to be compounded of three Chaldæan words for the Holy Trinity, *i.e.*, Father, Spirit, and Word. Others derive it from Abraxas, on which point Selden is worth consulting (c. 50, p. 113). The Jews explain it by *God sends forth his lightning to scatter his enemies*, which occurs in a Psalm of David. Another written in the Latin idiom, and which is used for averting evil, occurs to the following effect:

```
S D P N Q C N
  D P N Q C N
    P N Q C N
      N Q C N
        Q C N
          C N
            N
```

i.e., *Sospitante*, *Deo*, *Perdet*, *Nemo*, *Quin*, *Capiet*, *Nemo*, and *Nemo*, *Capiet*, *Quin*, *Nemo*, *Perdet*, *Deo*. *Sospitante*. A similar medicine for stopping the bleeding of the nose, is prescribed by Marcelus, with the addition that the following words, in a decreasing scale, be repeated:

```
S I C Y C U M A
  I C Y C U M A
    C Y C U M A
      Y C U M A
        C U M A
          U M A
            M A
              A
```

Thus Marcus Serv. Novian, when under fear of an attack of eye complaint, placed a writing embellished with the two Greek letters A and Π round his neck. Eudoxia, the wife of the Emperor, when in the pains of labour, ordered magic letters to be placed on her womb, that the dead fœtus might be ejected (Prolegom. ad Samonic. p.m. 60).

XIII.

NOW, it will be useful in a few words to illustrate the special matters connected with amulets, as words, deeds, or gestures. I shall note the principal points of each since I donot think there is any need to refer in this place to all the fancies of the ancients. I shall only indicate those which are still in vogue among Christians. Women recite certain prayers at eventide to S. Andrew, that the saint may obtain them husbands. Others in order to expel disease, blaspheme against the wild-fire, thinking that it can be driven away by execrations. Others when saluted by old women whom they regard as poisoners, do not thank them, but utter evil words lest they themselves may come to harm. More extraordinary examples however can be seen of what is done, than of what is said. About the time of Christmas, either in the evening or in the middle of the night, or in the early morning, many

superstitious acts are perpetrated. If a candle is taken into a closet, the shadow it casts of the person's head is observed, and from it predictions involving the life and death of the person are made. Others place small heaps of salt on a table, and by means of them predict the future. They measure corn, break eggs in water, and from these acts draw conclusions about diseases, calamities, or prosperous results which are to happen to them. Women are most of all at that time given to superstition, and the young maids quite as much as the old crones, a fact easily accounted for by the seductions of an untimely curiosities. In a corner of the room they have a custom of looking for hairs, and from this they draw conclusions regarding the hair of the men who are to marry them.

We have here to refer to the abuse of the sign of the cross which is inscribed on articles of domestic furniture, on parts of the house and especially the doors, by those given to superstition and especially on the Walpurgis night. Those are equally blameable who place their hope of prosperity and happiness in a small knife which has three marks of the cross upon it. On this abuse of the cross Brochmann (c. vii. Qr. fol. 29), should be consulted. Instruments of war fashioned like a cross are also usually regarded as of great importance for protecting the body, but the sin of

those who believe in such things is quite as great. Lastly I could make mention also of that superstition which is a highly cherished one among Christians, the use the 109th Psalm a charm. But the highly venerable Abbot, the famous D. Schmidus my eternally worshipful guardian, has explained at length not only the common abuse of this psalm but has very learnedly refuted and reproved this impious employment of it (In dissert. de abusu 109 Imprecat). In the same way also the most reverend D. Fectius has dealt wtth the subject (in Diss. de precibus contra alios institutis), and I have to refer my reader to his scholarly writings. Meanwhile we may safely refer to those superstitious rites connected with amulets which we observe every day of our lives among those who believe more in the devil than in God and who labour under a dense ignorance of natural science, or who have great faith without any ground of reason in the silly performances of jugglers both male and female.

XIV.

LASTLY there are metals, roots, and horny substances which are used for the sake of their hardness, and out of which small vessels and charms are made to wear round the neck, or flat charms are fashioned for tying round the body, and being applied externally.

Again they are taken internally, dissolved, digested and cast out again, and only cure natural disorders (Sennert. de Cons. et Dissens., p. 348., Pechlin de Purgant., c. xxx., p. 407). On the method of preparing these superstitious amulets, I shall not at present say anything. But I may mention that the reader who is curious on such matters should consult Paracelsus (c. l.) and Hiebnerus (in Myster. sigill., p. 140), whence he will get information as to the preparation of almost every single kind of amulet, and also their composition.

XV.

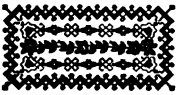
WE now come to the question as to whether and to what extent we have to distrust or believe in amulets. There are many who totally disapprove of the belief in amulets, and who with Theophrastus (de Histor. Plantor., bk. x., c. 21.) throw ridicule on all such subjects alike, as vain and superstitious. There are others who discredit the efficacy of amulets for the reason that very many such things own their origin to ignorant women, a statement easily understood when we remember that the weaker sex is exceedingly prone to superstitious ideas. Hence, perhaps, we can find reason for the prohibition by emperors and magistrates of all use of amulets in the fact that many vain and suspected elements were introduced into what

otherwise was quite lawful. Hence, again we find a reason brought forward against the use of amulets in the invention of them in joke. Ursinus (In acerra philologica p.m. 466), observes that fever was driven away by the use of the following amusing verse :—

Fecana, Lageti, Daphanes, Gebora, Gedaco.

But vice and various kinds of superstition are not able to take away all power and virtue from a thing that is true and natural.

END OF VOL. I.



[COLLECTANEA ADAMANTÆA.—XVIII.]

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BY

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A History of Amulets,

BY

MARTIN FREDERICK BLUMLER.

XVI.

THEREFORE, we find various dexterous arguments and different kinds of reasons adduced on behalf of the toleration of legitimate amulets. In my opinion amulets, drugs, and medicines which are lawful and natural, which have been endowed by Heaven at their first creation with their own secret properties, and which always have the same effect on the body, either by sympathy or antipathy, must not be altogether condemned. For they possess by nature a sympathetic virtue, because when applied to our bodies, and brought into action by heat, they silently exhale, and communicate hidden powers of their own. No one can

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feeble or lame animals, and cannot cure those on the point of death. No chains of bones or herbs can by application to his body help any mortal, but such things are the snares and tricks of the old enemy, by which that perfidious one strives to deceive the race of mankind."

XX.

OF the Fathers, Gregor. Nyessen (In Epist. ad. S. Let. Can. iii. p.m. 117. Edit. Paris) endeavours to dissuade men from the use of such superstitious amulets and chiefly warns them that they should betake themselves to the word of God. In the same way Hieronymus (In Matth. Bk. iv. c. 33.) quoted by Mornæus (In respons. ad. Lib. Episcop. Ebraicens de colloqu. Fontis bellaque p. 173) commends the divine precepts to be bound to the hand and kept before the eyes. But most of all does Chrysostom (in fin. homil. xxi. ad. pop. Antioch. p. 146. Edit. Paris) commend Christians to live another life than such as was lived by the superstitious Gentiles. B. Olearius (In operibus Biblio.) has some remarkable words on such superstitious observances. He says—"It is an empty observance that means to procure its objects by empty deeds, conduct, or speech, or that seeks to effect any good either spirtual or temporal while at the same time it has neither any natural or

supernatural connection with such observance and which cannot possibly be attained in this way." Again Toletus (Inst. Sac. Bk. iii. c. 14. p. 619) calls superstition "a rite opposed to religion" and elsewhere (p. 723) he calls it "a vain observance" since its effects are produced by means which are vain and useless, wherein by leaving the means ordained by God man places his hope in futile objects. Even the more robust of the Pagan writers show a detestation for superstitions, for Tacitus severely blames those (Annal. bk. 1) who were addicted to this vanity. He constantly speaks of those whose minds are prone to superstition as "fickle and abject." Curtius (bk. vii.) calls superstition "a deceitful plaything of the human mind." What need is there in searching pagan records against this vice? These arts which have to do with amulets and superstition are against the precepts of the first commandment, against all laws, and the intelligence of the truly wise. In brief, the superstitious man is one who pours forth impious prayers, shows in himself a spurious piety, gives to the world an impure sanctity, shows an innocence which falsifies its name, boasts of a truth which is no truth, loves a worship of God which is fictitious and hollow. Nay, as often as such a man prays he blasphemes; he implores heaven and calumniates man; he is always anxious, and ever unquiet; wherever he

turns, his heart sinks within him; the leaves of of the forest strike terror into him; every shadow appears as a human, devilish, or bestial shape; his dreams are full of spectres and apparitions; nay, when seeing, he is blind, when wakeful, he is asleep; his dreams are horrible nightmares—the empty and monstrous products of his brain:—such is the man who is the victim of superstition.

XXI.

WE have now to see that this art of superstition was not only condemned, in the Church, but was also severely and heavily interdicted by the laws of the Emperors. Under Ant. Caracala, we are told by Ælian Spartianus that those who wore, fastened round their neck amulets as remedies for the quartan or tertian ague were condemned [to death] (In Vita ejus. p. 314. edit. Gruter). Under Constantine, if any one used an old woman's incantation for alleviating pain, or wore round his neck remedies for the quartan ague or any other pain, or if any should be proved on evidence to have crossed over a monument to the dead in the even ing with evil intent, as a poisoner collecting the horrors of the tomb, and the false deceits of the spirits wandering there — he was strangled. Ammian Marcellinus (Bk. xxi. c. 12, and bk. xix. c. 27), is our authority on this point. Thus also

Charles V. (Constit. Criminal. Art. 109), threatens those exercising magic arts with punishment even if they inflicted no harm on other creatures. Not so long ago a public letter was published to the effect that at Berlin two women had been using incantations, and a public penance was appointed them in place of punishment, in the Temple of Werder. Adrian Beier gives further detail of thes nature of this punishment, which was appointed for those who used incantations, and was fixed in accordance with the circumstances of the case (In Dissert. Jurid. de Amuletis).

XXII.

FROM what I have said above, I have to repeat that amulets have a partial foundation on principles of nature, and are therefore so far harmless and innocent; as, for instance, amber is thought to stop catarrh and separate the secretions, and for that purpose is usually hung round the necks of children. Partly, however, they are superstitious in their nature, being composed of ingredients which clearly have nothing to do with the subject in hand and drawn from sources which are uncertain. Therefore it is that certain persons are sought for (**Sonntags-kinder**, **Hur-kinder**, to which we may refer the proverb, **Er hat Gluck wie ein Huren-kind**), as well as certain days, signs, and planets. The

names of the Holy Trinity are recited in a solemn and superstitious manner. Further, they require a certain hour, the 12th of the night, or **frühe nuchtern**, a certain attitude **hinterwerts**, and lastly, complete silence. Others bring to their aid ligatures, seals, inscriptions, miniatures, the Lamb of God, coins, and money of certain kinds: **Die alten Frauckfurter Kreutz-Pfennige. Mansfeldische thaler.** But it would be better if there were always and everywhere a ready supply of amulets against future indigence, idleness, and culpable laziness which these unlawful operations are so apt to produce.

XXIII.

LET us now see the sad results on those who indulge too much in superstitions. Men are led by this superstitious feeling gradually to leave God and turn to conversation and familiarity with Satan, and at the same time they place more confidence in such protection than in that of God, which they gradually begin to forget to invoke, for all they owe to God they impiously attribute to their amulet, in opposition to the teaching of the First Commandment. And, even although there were some kind of virtue in these amulets, which, however is not the case, such is counterbalanced by various wicked and superstitious circumstances.

Since, however, these is no efficacy in the words, looked at by themselves, and what is of the greatest importance, since there is no connection or affinity between the remedy and the effect itself, the mere discovery of the "Breviary of Characters and Ligatures" in the possession of any one was enough at one time to bring him under suspicion of Magical arts. What view must be taken of magic and its adjuncts I need not now explain at greater length, but I believe a distinction must be drawn between legitimate and illegitimate magic. But as to what results are to be attributed to these amulets it belongs to some one else to investigate and can not find place in my pages as definite hypotheses.

XXIV.

SOME have been rash, easily persuaded, and credulous enough to declare that although there is an element of superstition in the use of these amulets, yet that by their means confidence is instilled into the patient who uses them, and thus relief from pain is obtained. But seeing that the worship of God is brought into much danger by such things as I have cited above and since the use of amulets of an unlawful kind has incurred much odium and indignation from men of pious minds, I prefer not to waste more time in them. There are

besides several other pretexts by which amulets of an unlawful kind are often wont to be defended, as, for instance, that by means of magic many things generally suspected and regarded as impious are frequently discovered. But I fear that most of the products of magic—sympathetics, antipathetics, and incantations—are illegitimate, and that they frequently are associated with the teaching, help, and countenance of the devil, if only they were examined more carefully, although they are tricked out and disguised by the title and under the garb and colour of nature, law, and truth. The spirit of this world hides his poison under the appearance of natural processes, and thus the vile serpent is to be watched for, lurking under the grass. I fear that for those who use incantations, as for all the lost, the devil is preparing misery to come in his kingdom of darkness —that very devil, now far changed from the white appearance and innocent and harmless attitude which he formerly assumed—and against whom and his horrible infernal den the sentence is pronounced which is said to have been inscribed in black in some darksome dungeon—

Ad mala patrata, hæc sunt atra, theatra, parata.

Let no one, besides, be deceived even on the subject of amulets and useless pursuits by the various pretexts, the multitude or authority of

those who go astray therein, or by those who try to persuade us to unlawful practices, for we are not ignorant of that verse of the poet which says:

Nil tam blasphemum, quod non recipere patronum
Possit, et auctorem reddere honorificum.

XXV.

LASTLY, in addition to what I have mentioned above as unlawful amulets, I have to add various numbers, harmonical and magical, gesticulations performed in a certain way, various purifications, and expiations which have been instituted for unlawful purposes; herbs and other consecrated things, carvings, figures, writings, seals inscribed with unknown letters, images, charms, talismans, tokens, phylacteries, short prayers, inscriptions, fascennine verses, songs and dedicatory words. For further details, compare Reinesius (Lect. var., p. 27.) Nor do I doubt that the system of reckoning nativities is to be referred to this category, because the superstitious desire from them to learn to live a cautious and foreseeing life, and turn aside all evils that threaten them. Although I cannot think the genuine use of such systems altogether to be censured, since a very rare and curious system of the kind mentioned has been made by a man named B. Luther. I shall conclude with a list of the writers who have taken

the art of charms as a special subject for treatment. Bodin. Dæmon., bk. iii., c. 5; Stumpf., bk. i., c. 3, p.m. 31; Del-Rio disqu. Magic. bk. 1, c. 4; Wier. de præstig. dæm.; Frommann disp. de fascino; Boissard de Divinat., &c.

XXVI.

BUT seeing that Biblical Charms are on the same level with other kindred matters in the wider signification of the term amulet, I make a few remarks on them. There is a kind of divination which is employed in foretelling the future, or in any other doubtful case, which consists in the sacred writings being opened at random, and whichever passage of the opened book first meets the eye is taken as a response or oracular omen. These Scriptural Charms owe their origin to the Gentiles, for among the kinds of divining Charms are mentioned the Virgilian, from which ours take their rise. By these Charms Claudian Marcinus, Gordianus the Younger, and other Emperors judged the probable length of their life (Del-Rio). This use of Virgilian Charms was afterwards transferred by the Christians in the early Church to the sacred writings or books. These men in their superstition thought that it would be worth their while to substitute the Gospel text for the verses of Virgil, and by opening it, accompanied by some ceremonial, they

might enquire into what was doubtful. This, by a superlative act of blasphemy, they called the Apostolic Fates. They were used by the Emperor Heraclius, according to Cedrenus, by the Roman Diogenes, according to Cuspian, by Antony the Elder, according to Gregory (bk. viii.), and by Chranmes, the son of the Frankish King, according to Gregory of Tours (bk. iv., hist., c. 16 and 20). This method was afterwards used in the Church (1) in the election of a bishop, (2) in the beginning of war, (3) in any doubt which had seized the mind. When, however, this usage was observed to be diametrically opposed to the sacred writings, the system was completely rejected, as we see from the Councils of Agatha (Can. 42) and Ancyra (Can. 23). It is to be noted, besides, that the Word of God has no use but a doctrinal one. "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i., 16), and "The word of life" (Acts v. 20), "For all these things were written that ye might believe" (John xx., 31.) Lastly, these systems are a sin against God, because they strongly impugn his providence and make great abuse of his word. They are at variance with the duty of a Christian man or woman, whose object should be neither openly nor silently to have any dealings with Satan, the enemy of God. In one word, this

whole matter savours of superstition, and is merely a kind of subtle idolatry, which becomes no layman, and far less an ecclesiastic (i. Cor., v. 4). The believer in the Biblical Fates acts against himself, for he is cast into despair if the lot falls badly and lifted into a sense of security if it turn out well, from all which we have a clear proof that it is unlawful, impious, and insulting to God.

XXVII.

I HAVE thought it sufficient merely to indicate the passages where fuller information on either side can be had. There is still much obscurity on the subject of amulets, and their nature has not been quite perfectly investigated. Accordingly, if in what I have said I have not elucidated this subject as some would have liked, the narrowness of my intelligence, and my imperfection in recognising the causes of things will obtain pardon for me, for I am quite willing in such intricate and obscure subjects to confess my weakness. My present efforts have, however, been proportionate to my strength, powers, position, and opportunities. The rest I commend to the meditation of scholars, and I pray that they may have a happy result in the elucidation of this difficult matter. Perhaps afterwards my medita-

tions may be better and more numerous, and I shall be glad once more to give them to the world, provided that what I have now written may find favour with some at least, for to please all is impossible for any person or thing. The reader would do me a great favour by communicating to me any more facts on the subject which are known to himself. In short, I would like to end these meditations in the words of Augustine (de Trinitate Bk. I, c. iv.):—"Whoever reads these words, when hesitating like me, let him seek with me; when recognising his own errors, let him refer to me; when recognising mine, let him check me." Again, I am far from desiring to appear as if I wished to teach unlawful practices whilst making mention of them, seeing that, in reality, I rather detest them, and dissuade others from them. Hence again, I would use the words of the celebrated B. Conringius (Introd. Medic. c. xi. p. 222):—"Let us," says he, "make as little use as possible of these and similar wicked remedies, and let us keep ourselves entirely apart from them; but, at the same time, we ought to have a knowledge of them, in order that we may rightly judge concerning them, and be able to warn others from offending God by such great sins. If, after all these numerous testimonies, these strong reasons and warnings, drawn from profane and sacred writings,

one cannot be deterred from cherishing these forbidden things, he may yet allow himself to be deterred by a contemplation of the sinister and gloomy results that generally flow from such unlawful practices." Lastly, I pray to God, who has clemency and grace to bestow on labour, that He may avert these wiles of devils from as many as profess the Christian name and admit pious warnings, and that He may free them unscathed from such snares of Satan, and restore them to their pristine liberty. This may God grant!

ADDENDA.

I. The Atracian Art commonly called the Black Art is derived, according to some, from Atrax, who is said to have practised it first in Thessaly. Others derive it from *ater* (black), because the deeds of night com to us from it. The former derivation seems the true one, the latter merely allegorical.

II. Among superstitious amulets is to be placed the "Devil's night-dress," or the "Garment of Fate," which was formerly called **Noth-Hembde** and used for forwarding parturition and mitigating the pain of that act.

III. Jo. Jacob. Geuath is right in his judgment: "It is proper that the hands of women should be removed from the exercise of the deeper practices of medicine," although they ought not to be prevented from curing the slight ailments of their own households.

IV. The Theraphim of the heathen were small idols made of various substances, which,

according to the opinion of most authorities, were formed in the shape of dolls swathed in bandages, and which were affixed to various parts of the body, so that they could conveniently be worn. Hartnace shows that these dolls were used as guardians or familiar spirits, and for the purpose of investigating various abstruse subjects, for strengthening the body, and for causing various illusions.

NOTE.

Phylacteries were magical remedies, assuredly the result of superstition and dependent on no natural causes. Hence they are spoken of by Augustine when alluding to the catechising of the unlearned as forbidden and sacrilegious (c. 25). Dealing with those who are not to be regarded as Christians, he divides them into such as are drunkards, misers, swindlers, gamblers, adulterers, soothsayers, and, lastly, those who tie sacrilegious remedies on their bodies. Isodorus also says the same (Bk. viii. Orig. c. ix.) Gaudent. Brixieus, in his fourth treatise on the Reading of Exodus, divides idolatry into the following heads:—Poisoning, incantation, wearing of charms. (See August. Ep. 73).

Appendices.

APPENDIX A.

AMULETS AND CHARMS.

Boyle, says the author of the Demonologia, is persuaded that some of these external medicaments answer; for that, being himself subject to a bleeding from the nose, and obliged to use several remedies to check this discharge, he found the moss of a dead man's skull, though only applied so as to touch the skin until the moss became warm from being in contact with it, to be the most efficacious remedy. A remarkable instance of this nature was communicated to Zwelfer by the chief physician to the states of Moravia, who, having prepared some troches, or lozenges of toads, after the manner of Van Helmont, not only found that, being worn as amulets, they preserved him, his domestics, and friends from the plague, but that, when applied to the carbuncles or buboes, a consequence of this disease, in others, they

found themselves greatly relieved, and many even saved by them.

The learned Dr. Warburton is evidently wrong when he assigns the origin of these magical instruments to the age of the Ptolemies, which was not more than 300 years before Christ. For Galen tells us that the Egyptian king, Nechepsus, who lived 630 years before the Christian era, had written that a green jasper cut into the form of a dragon surrounded with rays, if applied externally, would strengthen the stomach and organs of digestion. We have, moreover, the authority of the Scriptures in support of this opinion; for what were the ear-rings which Jacob buried under the oak of Sechem, as related in Genesis, but amulets? And we are informed by Josephus, in his Antiquities of the Jews (lib. viii. c. ii. v.), that Solomon discovered a plant efficacious in the cure of epilepsy, and that he employed the aid of a charm or spell for the pupose of assisting its virtues. The root of the herb was concealed in a ring, which was applied to the nostrils of the demoniac: and Josephus remarks that he himself saw a Jewish priest practice the art of Solomon with complete success in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, and the tribunes of the Roman army. Nor were such means confined to the dark and barbarous ages. Theophrastus pronounced Pericles to be insane, because he discovered that he wore an amulet about his neck; and in the declining era of the Roman Empire this super-

stitious custom was so general, that the Emperor Caracalla was induced to make a public edict, ordaining that no man should wear any superstitious amulets about his person.

Dr. Chamberlain's anodyne necklace for a long time was the *sine quâ non* of mothers and nurses, until its virtue was lost by its reverence being destroyed, and those which have succeeded it have nearly run their race. The Grey Liverwort was at one time thought not only to have cured hydrophobia, but, by wearing it about the person, to have prevented the bite of mad dogs. Calvert paid devotions to St. Hubert for the recovery of his son, who was cured by this means. The son also performed the necessary rites at the shrine, and was cured not only of the hydrophobia, "but of the worser frenzy with which his father had instilled him." Cramp rings were also used, and eel-skins tied round the limbs, to prevent this spasmodic affection; and sticks laid crosswise on the floor on going to bed have also performed the like service. Numerous are the charms, amulets, and incantations used even in the present day for the removal of warts. We are told by Lord Verulam (vol. iii. p. 234) that, when he was at Paris, he had above a hundred warts on his hands, and that the English ambassador's lady, then at court, and a woman far above superstition, removed them all by rubbing them with the fat side of the rind of a piece of bacon, which was afterwards nailed to a post with

the fat side towards the south. "In five weeks," says my lord, "they were all removed."

As Lord Verulam is allowed to have been as great a genius as this country ever produced, it may not be irrelevant to the present subject to give, in his own words, what he has observed respecting the power of amulets. After deep metaphysical observations in nature, and arguments in palliation of sorcery, witchcraft, and divination, effects that far out-strip the belief in amulets, he observes, "We should not reject all of this kind, because it is not known how far those contributing to superstition depend on natural causes. Charms have not their power from contracts with evil spirits, but proceed wholly from strengthening the imagination, in the same manner that images and their influence have prevailed in religion; being called, from a different way of use and application, sigils, incantations, and spells."

There are many enthusiastic and equally credulous authors who have encouraged the belief in the reality of philters, and who adduce facts in confirmation of their opinions, as in all doubtful cases. Among these may be quoted Van Helmont, who says that, by holding a certain herb in his hand, and afterwards taking a little dog by the foot with the same hand, the animal followed him wherever he went, and quite deserted his former master. He also adds that philters only require a confirmation of Mumia. [By Mumia

is here understood that which was used by some ancient physicians for some kind of implanted spirit, found chiefly in carcases, when the infused spirit is fled; a kind of sympathetic influence, communicated from one body to another, by which magnetic cures, &c. were said to be performed.] On the principle of sympathetic influence he accounts for the phenomena of love transplanted by the touch of an herb; "for," says he, "the heat communicated to the herb, not coming alone, but animated by the emanations of the natural spirits, determines the herb towards the man, and identifies it to him. Having then received this ferment, it attracts the spirit of the other object magnetically, and gives it an amorous motion." But all this is mere absurdity, and has fallen to the ground with the other irrational hypothesis from the same source.—*Demonologia.*

APPENDIX B.

TALISMANS.

Talismans,—from the Greek word τέλεσμα, from which the Arabs derive tilsem—(*imago magica*) —are substances, particularly metals, minerals, roots,

and herbs, which were worn on the body, either as preventives against, or cures for, diseases. Similar, but not exactly the same, are amulets, which were supposed to possess the power of warding off misfortune or the effect of poison, and were inscribed with astrological signs and numbers. The most celebrated inscription was that of Abraxas, which comprehended the idea of heaven, and from which, according to Sprengel, the formula of "Abracadabra" arose, used by Serenus Sammonicus especially against tertian fever (S. Sammon. De re medica, 1581, 4 c.) Other formulas are given by Alex. Tralles. In later times, these talismans and amulets degenerated into the wearing of bloodstones, loadstones, necklaces of amber, images of saints, consecrated objects, and among the Catholics is found in the use of scapularies, with which, however, an idea of sanctity was associated.

Talismans were most frequently used by the Orientals, who even at the present time make use of them. Some were quite simple and smooth, others were artificially prepared,—in which case, however, the position of the stars was especially regarded in searching and preparing them, and from this cause they were often called constellation circles. By degrees they came to be made in all kinds of shapes, —as the sun, moon, and the planets. A mystical figure, representing the inexpressible name of God—which, according to the Jews, was preserved in the

Temple at Jerusalem—is found on many engraved gems; and two triangles crossing each other are supposed to have been the diagram of the Gnostics, with which they performed all sorts of miraculous cures. People went so far as to believe it possible to be placed in communication with the world of spirits by the aid of talismans; that by their use the love and esteem of men was to be gained; and that by the mere wearing of such talismans others could be brought into any wished-for condition of mind. Orpheus, for instance, says, that it is possible to fix the attention of an audience, and to increase their pleasure, by the use of the loadstone. A particular power was ascribed to precious stones.

As at the present time it has been observed that magnetic somnambulists are influenced in a peculiar manner by certain metals, vegetable substances, and precious stones; so is is not improbable that in the early ages the belief in the virtues of talismans was induced by similar observations. As loadstones, iron, copper, silver, gold, and quicksilver, diamonds, sapphires, rubies, and smaragds, are known to produce certain effects upon magnetic somnambulists, so were the special virtues of each formerly clearly defined. The Buddhists ascribed a sacred magical power to the sapphire, and it was called the stone of stones (optimus, quem tellus medica gignit). That mirror-like surfaces produce somnambulic phenomena has been long known, but it is only in later times

that investigations have shown the manifold influence of the prismatic colours, and that they have an unequal power of warmth. The electric polarities of precious stones are probably more important than their mere brilliancy; and, according to Amoretti's investigations, all have either positive or negative E. The diamond, the garnet, the amethyst, are negative E; the smaragd, the sapphire, aquamarine, the chrysolite, and the chrysophrase, positive E (Kieser's Archiv., vol. iv., p. 62). It was no wonder, therefore, that similar appearances arose through their influence on man, and that this influence should be observed and recorded. The influence of their brilliancy on the nervous system and the imagination has a certain foundation, as was firmly maintained among oriental nations, and during the middle ages (ad evocandas imagines). So, for instance, according to the teachings of the Buddhists, the sapphire produces equanimity and peace of mind, as well as affording protection against envy and treachery. "It will open barred doors and dwellings; it produces prayer and reconciliation with the Godhead; and brings with it more peace than any other gem of necromancy; but he who would wear it must lead a pure and holy life."—(Marbod. Liber lapid. ed. Beckmann.)

The Jewish high priests wore jewels on their breasts, and, according to the traditions, they served as a means of revealing to them the will of God. What Orpheus says of the power of stones is most remarkable,—and

particularly in regard to the loadstone :—"With this stone you can hear the voices of the gods, and learn many wonderful things. If you suffer from sickness, take it into your hands and shake it well. Then take courage, and ask it concerning the future. Everything will be unfolded truthfully before you; and if you hold it nearer to your eyes it will inspire you with a divine spirit (tum aude de vaticiniis eum interrogare, omnia enim exponet tibi vera, eumque postea propius ad oculos admovens, quando laveris, intuere: divinatus enim expirantem intelliges). It is a glorious remedy against wounds. It is a remedy for the bite of snakes, weak eyes, and headache; and makes the deaf to hear. Of crystals he says,—

"Crystallus—frigide tactu est,
Et renibus appositus, dolorem leniet."

Orpheus gives the following theory, founded on the influence of stones :—"The earth produces good and evil to us poor mortals; but for everything evil she also provides an antidote. Each kind of stone is formed of earth, in which incalculable powers lie hidden. Everything that can be done with roots may also be done with stones. Those have certainly great power, but stones have still greater. Roots live but for a short time, and then perish; their life only lasts as long as we obtain their fruits: but when they no longer exist, what can we hope more from the dead? Among plants we find some that are noxious, some that are beneficial; among the stones it will be diffi-

cult to find any that are hurtful. Armed with the loadstone you may pass unharmed among reptiles, even if they were to meet you in legions accompanied by black death." (Orph. Lithica, editio Gesneri.)

An old writer states as foflows :—

"The Diamond has the power of depriving the loadstone of its virtue, and is beneficial to sleep-walkers and the insane. The Arabian diamond is said to guide iron towards the poles, and is therefore called magnetic by some.

"The Agate disposes the mind to solitude. The Indian is said to quench thirst if held in the mouth.

"The Amethyst banishes drunkenness, and sharpens the wit.

"The Red-bezoar is a preservative against poison. The Bole Armeniac against infectious fevers of every kind.

"The Garnet preserves the health, produces a joyous heart, but discord between lovers.

"The Sapphire makes the melancholy cheerful, if suspended round the neck, and maintains the power of the body.

"The Red Coral stops the bleeding and strengthens digestion, if worn about the person.

"The Red Cornelian stops hemorrhage and cures dysentery.

"The Crystal banishes bad dreams from the sleeper.

"The Green Chrysophrase is of great benefit to the weak-sighted.

"The Chrysolite, held in the hand, banishes fever.

"The Jacinth enlivens the heart and the body.

"The Green Jasper prevents fever and dropsy, and strengthens the brain.

"The Onyx shows terrible shapes to the sleeper, and increases saliva in boys; worn about the neck, it prevents epileptic fits.

"The Opal is a remedy for weak eyes.

"The Green Smaragd prevents epilepsy, unmasks the delusions of the devil, and sharpens the memory.

"Amber cures dysentery, and is a powerful remedy for all affections of the throat.

"The Topaz cures hemorrhoids and sleep-walking, relieves affections of the mind, and laid upon wounds stops the blood.

"Serpentine disperses dropsy, if persons so afflicted stand with it for three hours in the sun,—for then they break out into a violent and unpleasant-smelling sweat; it cures worms, and, taken internally, is said to dissolve the stone in the bladder. (Camilli Leonardi speculum lapid.; et Petri Arlensis de Scudalupis sympathia septem metallorum; accedit magia astrologica Petri Constantii Albini, Hamb. 1717.)

In ancient times there was a universally accepted belief, that living together and breathing upon any person produce bad as well as good effects, and restored an undermined constitution, practised by a healthy person.

The usual means of plants and their juices, of stones, &c., might be used for particular cases; but, to eradicate deeply-rooted diseases, a young and fresh life was necessary. Especially, pure virgins and young children were supposed able to free persons from diseases by their breath, and even by their blood. The patient was to be breathed upon by them and sprinkled with their blood; to have bathed in the blood would have been better, could it have been possible. History supplies us with many remarkable instances of restoration of health, either by living with healthy persons, or by being breathed upon by them. One of the most remarkable is recorded in the Bible, of King David (I. Kings, i. 1-4.)—"Now King David was old and stricken in years, and they covered him with clothes, but he got no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, "Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin, and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat."

"So they sought for a damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king."

Bacon makes the remarks in his work "De vitæ et mortis historia," that the girl probably rubbed the king with myrrh, and other balsamic substances, according to the custom of the Persian maidens.

Pliny recommends breathing on the forehead as a remedy (Hist. nat., p. 28, c. 6). Galen reckons

among the most certain outward remedies for bodily weakness, young persons, who were laid on the bed so as to cover the body of the sufferer (Method. med. lib. vii.). Hyginus (De sanitate tuenda) is also of the same opinion; and Virgil says:

> "Et dedit amplexus atque oscula dulcia fixit,
> Occultum inspirans ignem."
>
> *Æneid*, lib. i.

Reinhart, in his "Bibelkrankheiten des alten Testaments," calls living with the young the restoration of the old. Bartholin (De morbis bibliis, c. ix.) says the same, and that it is a preventive to the chilliness of old age, and by the breath restores much of the expired physical powers. Rudolph of Hapsburg is said, according to Serar's account, when very old and decrepit, to have been accustomed to kiss, in the presence of their relations, the daughters and wives of princely, ducal, and noble personages, and to have derived strength and renovation from their breath. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, near the end of his life, was advised, by a Jewish physician, to have young and healthy boys laid across his stomach, instead of using fomentations. Johannes Damascenus, or Rabbi Moses (Aphorism. 30), relates, that for lameness and gout nothing better could be applied than a young girl laid across the affected part. Reinhart says, "Young dogs are also of great service, which we physicians lay, in certain cases, upon the

abdomen of the patient." Pomponatus (De naturalium effectum admirand., &c., p. 41) says, "The presence and the breath of young people is a good physic." Amplexus adolescentium boni anhelitûs est medicina temperata.

The Story of Luc. Clodius Hermippus is well known, who reached a very great age by being continually breathed upon by young girls. Kohausen records an inscription which was discovered at Rome by an antiquary, by name Gomar. It was cut in marble, and runs as follows:—

"To Æsculapius and Health
this is erected by
L. Clodius Hermippus,
who
by the breath of young girls
lived 115 years and 5 days,
at which physicians were no little
surprised.
Successive generations, lead such a life!"

(In Hermippo redivivo, sive Exercit. physic. med. curiosa de methodo rara ad cxv. annos prorogandæ senectutis: per anhelitum puellarum,—Francof. 1741.)*

Borelli and Hoffman caused their patients to sleep with animals, to relieve violent pain or obstinate disease. The great Boerhaave ordered an Amsterdam burgomaster to sleep between two boys and declared that the patient visibly increased in cheerfulness and

* An English translation of the work, "Hermippus Redivivus," forms part of this series of "Collectanea Adamantæa."

physical power. Hufeland says, in his "Art of Lengthening Human Life,"—"And certainly, when we consider how efficacious for lameness are freshly opened animals, or the laying of a living animal upon any painful affection, we must feel convinced that these methods are not to be thrown aside." Among the Greeks and Romans much virtue was ascribed to the breath; and the old French poets praise the pure breath of virgins as very beneficial:

"Alaine douce tant
C'un malades alast du doux fleur guerisant."

It was, however, very early discovered that the immediate contact of the breath was not necessary, and that by breathing on lifeless substances they might be made to possess curative powers. Various substances were also worn upon the person, and then given to invalids, by which meana a magnetic communication was created. This was often done to allay spasms, pain, or fever.—(Ennemoser, Hist. Mag., vol. i., pp. 113-119.

THE END.

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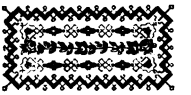

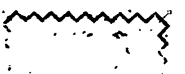

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